

VZCZCXRO9999

PP RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHPG #1293 3461510
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 121510Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9894
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0013

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001293

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2012

TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [EZ](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN BLASTS THE CZECHS FOR REACTION TO NIE

REF: A. STATE 165967

[¶](#)B. PRAGUE 1274

[¶](#)C. PRAGUE 1156

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶](#)11. (C) Summary: Iran has reacted harshly to the Czech stance on the recently released NIE and their decision to continue missile defense negotiations. They appear to have, at least temporarily, halted what were tentative steps towards normalizing relations. End summary

[¶](#)12. (C) During a meeting with Czech MFA experts on the Middle East on Dec 11, we inquired about the status of efforts to normalize Czech-Iranian relations (as reported reftel C, the Czechs have proposed upgrading their diplomatic relations to Ambassador level, largely with an eye towards their 2009 EU Presidency; relations were downgraded in 1997 after Prague-based Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty launched its Farsi service). The MFA reported that in the fall they had taken the step of seeking agreement for an Ambassador in Tehran; the candidate was the former Czech Ambassador to Nigeria, who unfortunately died several weeks ago, forcing the Czechs to reassess their plans for the mission in Tehran.

While the Iranians had not approved agreement prior to the Czech diplomat's death, the Czechs noticed a clear improvement in Czech-Iranian relations in recent months, at least here in Prague. The Iranian Charge and other resident diplomats were much more active, meeting with various departments in the MFA and other Czech ministries that had not seen an Iranian diplomat in years, on what were termed "normal" issues.

[¶](#)13. (C) This all changed, however, following the release of the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) and the Czech government's immediate and clear comments that (a) Iran remains a threat, and (b) they would continue with negotiations on missile defense. The MFA issued statement to this effect on December 5 (see paragraph 5). The Iranian Charge demarched the MFA Middle East Department on December 7, expressing their displeasure with the Czech position in a tone that was a sharp break from conversations in the past months. On December 12 the Iranian Charge demarched the MFA Security Policy Department on the NIE and missile defense, citing the MFA statement and comments made by Director Veronika Kuchynova-Smigolova on weekend talk shows. Kuchynova-Smigolova told us after the meeting that the Charge had characterized her as "tougher than Condoleezza Rice."

[¶](#)14. (C) Comment: We do not anticipate any change in Czech policy as a result of the Iranian demarches. The Czech effort to normalize relations has obviously suffered a dual setback. In a few months, once they have determined another suitable candidate for Tehran and the Iranians have had a chance to cool off, we expect the Czechs will try again. End comment.

Czech MFA Statement on NIE

¶5. (U) The following is the Czech statement posted on the MFA website December 5.

Statement of the MFA on the Published Report of U.S. Intelligence Services on the Nuclear Military Programme of Iran

¶1. According to the Report, Iran did develop a secret nuclear military programme, stopped it in 2003 and is able of renewing it at any moment.

¶2. The abortion of the programme is a confirmation of the successful international community pressure and this pressure concerning the nuclear programme of Iran should continue in the future.

¶3. According to the Report Iran will be probably able of producing sufficient quantity of nuclear material for a nuclear bomb between 2010 and 2015. That corresponds to current estimations. In this time schedule the European pillar of antimissile defense should be in place.

¶4. The Report covers the nuclear programme, not the programme of missile carriers development. This programme continues, as it was confirmed recently by Iran announcing a test of the Ashura solid-fueled ballistic missile.

¶5. For these reasons the Report of the U.S. intelligence services will not influence the position of the Czech Government on further negotiations with the USA concerning a possible location of a radar base on the Czech territory.

Graber